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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 11 March to 28 May 2014

I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the past three months, pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended by subsequent resolutions, most recently through resolution 2131 (2013).

II. Situation in the area and activities of the Force

2. During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was generally maintained, albeit in a continuously volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. The most significant violation since the conclusion of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israeli and Syrian forces occurred on 18 and 19 March, when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) fired into the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side, which, according to Syrian authorities, resulted in the death of two Syrian Arab armed forces soldiers and the wounding of 17 others. The IDF fire was in response to what IDF claimed was the placing of an improvised explosive device in the Israeli-occupied Golan that injured four IDF soldiers, one of them severely. Violations of the ceasefire by both sides are set out below. The Syrian armed forces continued to deploy personnel and equipment inside the area of separation and carried out military activities and security operations against armed members of the opposition in the UNDOF area of operation, at times in response to offensives carried out by the armed members of the opposition. Inside the area of separation, the presence of the Syrian armed forces and military equipment, as well as any other armed personnel and military equipment, is in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. As underscored by the Security Council in its resolution 2131 (2013), there should be no military activity of any kind in the area of separation.

3. In the afternoon of 18 March, United Nations personnel at observation post 73 observed an explosion in the vicinity of a nearby IDF position where four IDF soldiers were walking. At the same time, three individuals were observed standing at some distance from the site of the incident, near the Alpha line, watching the event. Small arms fire ensued from north-east of Majdal Shams on the Alpha side. That was followed by a total of eight artillery smoke rounds originating from the Alpha side, which landed in the immediate vicinity of United Nations observation post 73.

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The resulting smoke screen prevented further observation from the observation post. Subsequently, United Nations outpost 32A and observation post 72 heard and observed seven heavy explosions and four rockets, respectively, that landed in the vicinity of a Syrian armed forces position straddling the Bravo line. United Nations personnel at outpost 32A heard another 15 explosions impacting near the position. At the time of the incident, United Nations personnel at observation post 71 observed 10 individuals in a Syrian Arab armed forces communications post north of the observation post looking through binoculars towards observation post 73. Shortly afterwards, four armed persons walked towards observation post 73 to observe from a closer location. The Force Commander was immediately in contact with both the Bravo and Alpha sides and urged utmost restraint.

4. IDF informed UNDOF that their soldiers had observed one person cross the Alpha line in the vicinity of observation post 73 and had sent a patrol to the location. Having crossed through the technical fence, the IDF personnel disembarked from their vehicle and walked towards the location, where they saw three persons, one of whom carried a radio, standing close to the line. The IDF personnel asked the individuals to move away from the line prior to firing warning shots. The IDF soldiers proceeded further, crossing on a safe path through an IDF minefield. IDF informed UNDOF that an improvised explosive device exploded while the third IDF soldier was crossing, injuring the soldier severely and the other three slightly. IDF told UNDOF that they held the Syrian armed forces responsible for this incident. Syrian authorities informed UNDOF that the Syrian armed forces were not responsible for the incident and that the IDF fire had hit three Syrian armed forces positions, destroying one piece of artillery. Later that day, in a meeting with the IDF Chief of Staff and other senior IDF officers, who expressed their concern about the incident, the Force Commander again urged IDF to show utmost restraint.

5. In the early hours of 19 March, IDF conducted airstrikes on three Syrian armed forces locations on the Bravo side. United Nations personnel at Camp Faouar heard aircraft flying from the west to the east, firing missiles, and then heard four heavy explosions approximately three kilometres (km) from the camp. United Nations personnel in Camp Faouar went into shelter. The Syrian authorities informed UNDOF that IDF had conducted airstrikes at several Syrian Arab armed forces locations on the Bravo side. IDF subsequently confirmed to UNDOF that they had carried out the airstrikes. According to Syrian authorities, one Syrian Arab armed forces soldier was killed and eight were injured in the IDF response on 18 March, while one Syrian Arab armed forces soldier was killed and nine others were injured in the airstrikes.

6. The UNDOF investigation into the incidents could not establish whether the explosion that injured the IDF soldiers on 18 March had resulted from a drifted mine or an improvised explosive device. UNDOF found that the impacts around observation post 73 were the result of artillery rounds containing a phosphorous substance. IDF, in a subsequent meeting, informed the UNDOF Force Commander that it had issued instructions to prevent the firing of phosphorous smoke rounds in proximity to United Nations positions in the future. The UNDOF investigation team found that the airstrikes hit a building at an Al-Baath Youth Vanguards Camp, where Syrian Arab armed forces soldiers are located, the compound of a building used by Syrian security forces at the Sa'saa checkpoint and a Syrian Arab armed forces

brigade headquarters nearby, destroying and damaging several pieces of military and civilian equipment.

7. In the context of the clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition, there were six incidents of firing from the Bravo side across the ceasefire line during the reporting period. Neither casualties nor damages were sustained. On 8 May, in the course of fighting between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition in the area of Al Qahtaniyah in the central area of separation, east of Quneitra (see para. 14 below), two tank rounds landed on the Alpha side. The points of origin were not observed. On 11 May, UNDOF observed one artillery round landing 300 metres from observation post 51 and west of the Israeli technical fence. On 22 May, one mortar round landed west of the ceasefire line in the vicinity of United Nations observation post 51. During the fighting on 8 May and on the subsequent days, United Nations personnel at observation post 51 on several occasions observed multiple rounds of machine gun fire, originating at times from the direction of Al Qahtaniyah and at other times from the direction of Quneitra within the area of separation, passing in close proximity to the observation post and landing west of the ceasefire line. On 11 May, in one such incident, small arms fire caused damage to binoculars mounted at the observation platform of the observation post. On 7 April, IDF informed UNDOF that two mortar rounds, fired from the Bravo side during the attack by armed opposition groups on Tal al-Garbi, a hilltop position, had landed across the ceasefire line in the vicinity of United Nations outpost 82B. United Nations personnel did not observe the incident. In addition, on two separate occasions, on 23 and 24 April, respectively, a Syrian armed forces aircraft dropped a bomb in the vicinity of Al Rafid village in the area of separation.

8. On three occasions, IDF fired across the ceasefire line onto the Bravo side. On 28 March, observation post 51 heard a loud explosion and observed one IDF tank south of the observation post and six IDF soldiers observing east towards United Nations outpost 60A. IDF subsequently confirmed that it had fired at three individuals trying to cross the Israeli technical fence. On 10, 19, 21 and 22 April, United Nations personnel observed between two and six IDF soldiers briefly crossing the Alpha line in the vicinity of United Nations observation post 73. On 30 April, United Nations personnel observed three armed members of the opposition in the vicinity of the unmanned outpost 60A, one of whom crossed the ceasefire line and cut the barbed wire on the Israeli technical fence to the west of the outpost. All incidents of firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line, as well as the crossing of the ceasefire line, are violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

9. Crossing of the ceasefire line by civilians, primarily shepherds, was observed on an almost daily basis by United Nations personnel on the ground. This included persons digging out and removing landmines, as further described in paragraph 24. On 19 and 22 May, IDF fired warning shots towards shepherds as they were crossing the ceasefire line. Throughout the reporting period, UNDOF frequently observed armed members of the opposition interacting with IDF across the ceasefire line in the vicinity of United Nations position 85. On 59 occasions, particularly during periods of heavy engagement between the Syrian armed forces and members of the armed opposition, UNDOF observed armed members of the opposition transferring 89 wounded persons from the Bravo side across the ceasefire line to IDF and IDF on the Alpha side handing over 19 treated and 2 deceased individuals

to the armed members of the opposition on the Bravo side. On one occasion, UNDOF observed IDF on the Alpha side handing over two boxes to armed members of the opposition on the Bravo side.

10. On 16 April, IDF informed UNDOF that it had observed three individuals close to the Israeli technical fence in the vicinity of the temporarily vacated United Nations outpost 86A, whom they alleged to have placed six improvised explosive devices between the old and new technical fence and requested UNDOF to carry out an investigation. An UNDOF investigation team went to the location, but owing to security concerns, it was considered too dangerous to conduct a full investigation. IDF informed UNDOF that in a subsequent investigation on 17 April IDF had identified eight anti-personnel mines, seven of which were west of the technical fence and one to the east on the Alpha side, and that IDF had exploded the seven mines west of the technical fence in their location and left the eighth one in place. UNDOF continued to observe and report instances of transborder movements of unidentified individuals between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in the northern part of the area of separation.

11. Overall, in the course of the reporting period, heavy clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition continued in the UNDOF area of operation. In the northern area of limitation, shelling and explosions were observed in the areas of Mazra'at Bayt Jinn and Bayt Jinn. Fighting remained, however, most intense in the south-central parts of the area of separation and in the area of limitation just east of it, where armed opposition groups captured three strategic hill positions from the Syrian armed forces. The presence and use of heavy weapons and equipment by the Syrian armed forces continued while armed members of the opposition were observed to have additional heavy weapons and military equipment in their possession following the capture of the Syrian armed forces positions. The Syrian armed forces continued to carry out airstrikes in the area of limitation, at times in close proximity to the area of separation. UNDOF observed a larger number of airstrikes towards the end of the reporting period in the area bounded by the Bravo line in the west and the towns of Jaseem and Nawa in the east. The local truce arrangement in the areas of Jabbata, Ufaniyah and Khan Arnabah, in the northern and central areas of the area of separation, generally held although UNDOF observed sporadic firing from Syrian armed forces positions in areas surrounding Ufaniyah.

12. The heavy fighting that had commenced in the UNDOF area of operation at the end of January in the vicinity of the hilltop positions of Tal al-Garbi and Tal al-Sharqi and the surrounding villages in the area of limitation, immediately adjacent to the area of separation, continued throughout the reporting period, interrupted only by short phases when fighting decreased. The area of the fighting extended through the 10-km zone of the area of limitation stretching from Nab' as-Sakhr in the north to Nawa in the south. Small arms fire from inside the area of separation and heavy artillery, mortar, main battle tank, machine gun and anti-aircraft fire from the area of limitation in close vicinity to the Bravo line occurred on a daily basis. As a result of sustained and coordinated attacks by armed opposition groups, the Syrian armed forces withdrew from numerous of its positions in the area of limitation and lost control of the terrain surrounding Tal al-Garbi and Tal al-Sharqi, leaving the positions isolated. The Syrian armed forces sustained the positions by conducting resupply missions by helicopter. On each occasion, UNDOF informed IDF of the activity. The third position, Tal al-Jabyiam, north-west of

Nawa, in the area of limitation, also was besieged by armed opposition groups. On 7 April, approximately 400 armed members of opposition groups conducted coordinated attacks from the north and the south on Tal al-Garbi, supported by artillery fire from what UNDOF assessed to have been up to three tanks in the possession of the armed groups. In the afternoon of the same day, UNDOF observed four black flags on top of the position. Subsequently, many armed opposition members were observed leaving the position. On 24 and 27 April, respectively, Tal al-Jabyiam and Tal al-Sharqi were also captured by opposition groups, which in each case was followed by heavy Syrian armed forces artillery shelling onto the lost hilltop positions. In the course of the clashes on and around Tal al-Garbi, approximately 280 individuals fled the area of the fighting and took shelter in the vicinity of United Nations position 80. In mid-May, approximately 180 individuals fleeing from shelling and clashes in Jaseem, in the area of limitation, took shelter near United Nations position 80. At the time of writing the present report, all of them remained in the vicinity of the position, in addition to around 30 others, who had arrived in April. Also in mid-May, UNDOF observed around 180 persons who had fled fighting in Nawa, and had moved to Al Rafid village in the area of separation.

13. In the afternoon of 24 April, two members of the armed opposition displayed the severed head of a presumed Syrian armed forces officer as they passed United Nations position 80. Since the capture of Tal al-Garbi and Tal al-Sharqi, the armed members of the opposition have been observed to move almost freely between Al-Rafid and the Bir Ajam-Braika area. Bir Ajam serves as a training area and assembly point for armed opposition members. By the end of April, UNDOF and Observer Group Golan observed the flying of black flags believed to be associated with militant groups scattered throughout the central and southern part of the area of separation, including on three Syrian armed forces positions captured by the armed members of the opposition. The ongoing fighting significantly restricted the UNDOF supply routes to United Nations positions in the southern part of the area of operations.

14. On 8 May, several units of armed members of different opposition groups totalling an estimated 100 individuals supported by three tanks, approached the area of Al Qahtaniyah in the central area of separation to the east of Quneitra and attacked the village from the south and the east. Syrian armed forces personnel left their positions in the village, following which UNDOF observed them firing onto the village from their positions along the Bravo line and in the area of limitation. Clashes between armed members of the opposition and Syrian armed forces personnel based in Quneitra also ensued in the area of the main road junction north of United Nations position 60. In the course of the fighting, UNDOF observed approximately 120 additional armed members of the opposition join the fighting. Syrian armed forces were observed to have reinforced their troops in the area with six tanks, four armoured vehicles, and around 70 to 80 troops. Fighting subsided in the afternoon but recommenced the following day and continues at the time of writing this report, albeit at reduced levels and remains more localized in the immediate vicinity of Al Qahtaniyah and Quneitra, and generally does not affect movement on the main road. At the time of reporting, three Syrian Arab armed forces tanks remain in the area of separation. Two tanks in the possession of the armed opposition groups also are believed to remain in the area of separation. Between 10 and 14 May, UNDOF observed around 170 civilians leaving

Al Qahtaniyah towards the north. UNDOF stopped all movement in the area of separation during the first day of the fighting; operational movements recommenced in areas not affected the following day. Regular movement on the main road connecting Camp Faouar and Camp Ziouani recommenced on 13 May. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate conveyed to UNDOF that Syria had no intention to attack IDF, but only to fight the armed opposition, and that any rounds landing west of the ceasefire line would be inadvertent. IDF informed the UNDOF Force Commander that Israel would not tolerate fire from the Bravo side landing on the Alpha side. During the initial phase of heavy fighting, the Force Commander remained in contact with both sides, urging them to exercise restraint, with a view to preventing an escalation of the situation between the two parties.

15. On numerous occasions during periods of fighting between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition, rounds landed inside or in close proximity to United Nations positions, at times forcing United Nations personnel to take shelter. On 4 April, personnel at United Nations observation post 53 observed a bullet hole in the window of a building at the position. On 17 April, one tank round and one air burst fired from a Syrian armed forces position in Kammuniyah, in the area of limitation, landed close to United Nations position 69. On 27 April and 2, 6 and 10 May, nine tank rounds fired from the same Syrian armed forces position landed in proximity to position 69, with one tank round hitting, on 6 May, the perimeter fence of the position. No injuries to United Nations personnel were sustained in the incidents. On 18 April, Syrian armed forces soldiers fired automatic gunfire at a civilian car travelling from Ruihinah to Bir Ajam passing by United Nations position 68. Subsequently, United Nations personnel at the position discovered a bullet mark on a sand bag. On 27 April, one burst of anti-aircraft fire from a Syrian armed forces position targeted one vehicle moving from Bir Ajam to Ruihinah. Two stray rounds impacted two buildings at United Nations position 68, resulting in minor damage to United Nations property. On 29 April, two stray bullets hit the wall of the generator building at the position and several rounds of anti-aircraft fire landed near the position. On 4 and 6 May, 6 and 11 bursts of anti-aircraft fire, respectively, from a Syrian armed forces position at Zbedah al-Sharkia in the area of limitation landed in proximity to United Nations position 68. On 22 April, one tank round and several bursts of anti-aircraft fire detonated in close proximity to United Nations observation post 52. On 23 April, one burst of fire impacted near United Nations observation post 52, when several bursts of anti-aircraft rounds were fired towards a vehicle passing on a road beneath the post. Several ricochets were heard over and within close proximity of the observation post during the engagement.

16. In the course of the fighting around Al Qahtaniyah and Quneitra, which started on 8 May, one mortar round hit United Nations position 60 and damaged five trucks. On the same day, several instances of firing close to the position occurred. United Nations personnel at positions 27 and 60 and personnel in Camp Ziouani went into the shelter during periods of heavy fighting in the area. United Nations position 27 in Quneitra sustained damage to a United Nations truck and a window in one of the position's buildings following an airburst in the vicinity of the old hospital building, which is used by the Syrian armed forces. Several armed members of the opposition moving onto a small hill in the vicinity of United Nations observation post 56 fired small arms and machine guns across the observation post towards a Syrian Arab armed forces position. A group of armed members of the opposition north of

observation post 51, on 8 May, fired approximately 20 single shots towards the lower platform of the observation post. During an inspection of Camp Ziouani premises on 12 May, three stray bullets were found to have impacted a supply store and one the windscreen of a United Nations vehicle. The Force Commander protested to the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate all firings into and close to United Nations positions and observation posts that were observed to have originated from Syrian armed forces positions.

17. In utilizing its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire and see that it is scrupulously observed, as prescribed by the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, UNDOF reports all breaches of the ceasefire line. The Force Commander maintained regular and close contact with IDF and the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate. During periods of heightened tensions and in the aftermath of incidents along the ceasefire line, the Force Commander was in immediate and ongoing contact with both parties to prevent an escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line.

18. The Syrian security forces continued to maintain checkpoints inside the area of separation mainly along the main road connecting Quneitra in the west to Khan Arnabah at the eastern entrance. With armed opposition groups dominant in significant parts of the area of separation, the Syrian armed forces withdrew from checkpoints in some areas and strengthened their deployment along and in areas close to the main road. In addition, Syrian armed forces personnel maintained checkpoints at the eastern entrances to the area of separation, straddling the Bravo line, to control and restrict traffic. The checkpoints often interfered with the freedom of movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan. Restrictions on the movement of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan in the areas of separation and limitation have increased as a result of extended clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition, disrupting the supply lines to UNDOF positions in the southern part of the area of separation. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate advised UNDOF that, for security reasons, all United Nations personnel should avoid areas where clashes were ongoing and that UNDOF should not carry out night-time movements.

19. During the reporting period, United Nations personnel encountered increased restrictions of movement and risk, owing also to the placement by armed members of the opposition of improvised explosive devices alongside roads in the area of separation. UNDOF continued to observe the presence of improvised explosive devices and roadblocks in the vicinity of or on access roads to United Nations positions 27, 60 and 68, United Nations observation posts 51 and 56, and outpost 32A.

20. On 20 March, an UNDOF convoy was stopped on two occasions by Syrian Arab armed forces at a checkpoint claiming that armed opposition groups were active in areas beyond the checkpoint. On the second occasion, a Syrian Arab armed forces soldier pointed a rifle at the lead vehicle for the convoy to stop and turn back. On 22 April, three unidentified armed persons attempted to stop an UNDOF convoy travelling from observation post 71 to Camp Faouar. The armed persons fired warning shots. The convoy did not stop and some stones were thrown towards one of the United Nations vehicles. Owing to the presence of armed opposition groups in the general area of Bayt Jinn and Mazra'at Bayt Jinn in the northern area of limitation, UNDOF continued to re-route its movements to Mount Hermon positions, resulting in a doubling of the travel time in each direction. On three

occasions, mortar fire landed in close proximity to an UNDOF convoy travelling between Camp Faouar and Damascus. No United Nations personnel were injured and no United Nations vehicles sustained damage in the incidents.

21. UNDOF has protested the presence of Syrian armed forces and equipment in the area of separation, the firing into and inside the area of separation and the firing towards United Nations personnel and facilities. The Force Commander reiterated to the Syrian authorities the obligation of the armed forces to halt military operations in the area of separation and to cease firing from the area of limitation, stressing the importance of abiding by the terms of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. Senior United Nations officials have conveyed similar messages to the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations.

22. Within this challenging operational environment, UNDOF supervised the area of separation by manning static positions, conducting around-the-clock observation and resuming patrols along most of the ceasefire line to ensure no breaches of the ceasefire line occurred. UNDOF, through Observer Group Golan, continues to establish temporary observation posts in several locations along the ceasefire line on the Alpha side between two and four times weekly, so as to increase the Force's situational awareness of the area of separation, in particular in the south, where United Nations positions and observation posts have been vacated temporarily owing to the security situation. Through the Observer Group Golan, UNDOF continued to carry out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the area of limitation on the Alpha side. Liaison officers from the Alpha side accompanied Observer Group Golan inspection teams. Inspections and mobile operations in the area of limitation on the Bravo side remain suspended because of the security situation. As in the past, the Force faced restrictions on freedom of movement and its inspection teams were denied access to some positions on the Alpha side. Observer Group Golan members experienced a significant increase in restrictions of movement on the Alpha side when entering and exiting United Nations observation posts 52 and 73, located to the east of the Israeli technical fence. At the end of April, IDF unilaterally decided to decrease the number of technical fence crossings for the two observation posts from four to two per day, thereby hampering the ability of United Nations personnel to carry out vehicle patrols, as well as access by contractors to perform enhancement works at the observation posts.

23. UNDOF continued to adapt its operational posture to the military activities of the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition in its area of operation. Following the incidents that occurred on 5 March (see S/2014/199, para. 5) and 18 March along the ceasefire line and on the basis of ongoing analysis of the security situation on the ground, UNDOF, in close liaison with the parties, recommenced its mobile operational activities along the ceasefire line. In the northern area of separation, UNDOF recommenced vehicle patrols from United Nations positions 27 to 37 and foot patrols from United Nations position 16 to observation post 73, a route that is inaccessible to vehicles. UNDOF also occupies again United Nations outpost 37B on a daily basis. In the southern part of the area of separation, UNDOF conducts daily patrols between United Nations positions 69, 80 and 85, as well as regular patrols to outposts 85A and 86B, with a view to observing developments in areas from which UNDOF temporarily withdrew its personnel in early 2013. UNDOF recommenced these patrols after having assessed

the prevailing security environment as permissive and not exposing United Nations peacekeepers to undue risk. The main effort continued to remain on static activities combined with a focus on enhanced situational analysis, reporting and liaising with the parties to prevent situations from escalating. At the end of April, UNDOF started repainting the United Nations barrels indicating the ceasefire line in the northern area of operations. Both parties maintained defensive positions in the respective areas of limitation. Israeli customs officials continued to operate periodically at the IDF post at the UNDOF crossing gate between the Israeli-occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

24. In the vicinity of the ceasefire line in the area of separation, mines continued to pose a threat to UNDOF personnel and local inhabitants. Owing to the long-term presence of the mines and the deterioration of their detonation systems, the threat increases from year to year. On several occasions throughout the reporting period, United Nations personnel observed armed and unarmed persons digging out and removing landmines in the vicinity of the IDF technical fence and from around United Nations position 85. On 29 April, UNDOF observed 10 individuals collecting landmines south-west of Tal al-Sharqi when an explosion occurred, which resulted in the death of six individuals and the injury of four others. On 6 May, a landmine exploded approximately 600 metres from United Nations observation post 53, setting off a large grass fire, which in turn led to the explosion of additional mines. United Nations personnel evacuated briefly the observation post until the fire had subsided.

25. The limitations imposed by the security situation on the Bravo side notwithstanding, UNDOF continued its efforts to liaise with local authorities and engage with the local population to explain the mandate and activities of the Force. This remained important in the light of the security situation in the UNDOF area of operation and as part of the effort to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground.

26. On 20 May, UNDOF, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, facilitated the crossing of four students from the Bravo side to the Alpha side. UNDOF continued to provide emergency medical treatment to civilians on a strictly humanitarian basis. During periods of intensive fighting between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition, local inhabitants of areas under fire fled, moving to safer areas in the area of separation and limitation, at times seeking shelter in the vicinity of United Nations position 80. UNDOF observed hundreds of civilians leave their homes in Ruihinah, Um Batinah, Braika, Bir Ajam and adjacent communities.

27. As at 23 May, UNDOF comprised 1,251 troops, including 47 women, from Fiji (504), the Philippines (346), India (192), Ireland (135), Nepal (72) and the Netherlands (2). In addition, 77 military observers from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), including 4 women, assisted the Force in carrying out its tasks.

28. Given the evolving security situation in the UNDOF area of operation, UNDOF further adjusted its operations, with a view to ensuring its ability to implement its mandate safely and securely. The operational adjustments also involved a temporary shift in the focus of the activities of a number of Observer Group Golan military observers from patrolling and inspection to round-the-clock static observation, liaison and situation analysis. Essential operational and

administrative movements also are carried out. Restrictions placed by some Member States on the activities of UNTSO military observers on the Bravo side continue to limit their capacity in assisting the implementation of the mandate of UNDOF. These restrictions affect adversely the operational activities of Observer Group Golan, on whose skills UNDOF relies more heavily with the focus on static observation. UNDOF continues to adopt and update mitigation measures on the basis of a comprehensive risk assessment carried out by the Force with the support of the Secretariat. Measures introduced earlier remain in place, including the reinforcement by UNDOF soldiers of observation posts manned by Observer Group Golan military observers in specific locations, regular rehearsals of medical evacuation, shelter and other emergency exercises, improved perimeter defence of the Force headquarters and all other positions and provision of personal protective equipment to all military and civilian personnel and the necessary training. The UNDOF counter-improvised explosive device equipment arrived in Beirut and awaits the clearance of the Syrian authorities for entry into Syria. UNDOF continues to engage the Syrian authorities for an early induction into the mission of the counter-improvised explosive device equipment. This induction of the equipment in UNDOF will improve significantly the Force capability to counter improvised explosive devices. The overall security situation has rendered it necessary for UNDOF to continue to use, with the cooperation of the relevant authorities, alternative ports of entry and departure for Force personnel.

29. All movements of UNDOF personnel on the Bravo side continue to be carried out in formed convoys using armoured vehicles. Logistics movements are provided with armed escorts. Following the arrival of additional light armoured vehicles, all UNDOF national staff whose positions are based at UNDOF headquarters, Camp Faouar, regularly report to work. A number of national staff, whose functions do not require their presence in Camp Faouar, continue to work from the UNDOF office in Damascus. Only essential international staff work in Camp Faouar. The offices of non-essential staff have been relocated to Camp Ziouani, which also serves as an alternate headquarters of the Force.

III. Financial aspects

30. By its resolutions 67/278 of 28 June 2013 and 68/260 of 27 December 2013, the General Assembly appropriated the total amount of $60.6 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. The proposed budget for UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 is currently under consideration by the General Assembly during the second part of its resumed sixty-eighth session. Should the Security Council approve my recommendation set out in paragraph 44 below, the cost for the maintenance of the Force during the extension period will be limited to resources approved by the General Assembly.

31. As at 28 May 2014, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNDOF Special Account amounted to $25.3 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amounted to $1,229.0 million.

32. As at 27 May 2014, amounts owed to contributors for troop costs totalled $2.9 million. Reimbursements for troop costs and for equipment and self-sustainment have been made for the period up to 31 January 2014 and

31 December 2013, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IV. Implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)

33. The Security Council, when deciding in its resolution 2131 (2013) to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, until 30 June 2014, called upon the parties concerned to immediately implement its resolution 338 (1973) and requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the end of the period, a report on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement that resolution. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, in particular the efforts made at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973), was dealt with in my report on the situation in the Middle East (A/68/371), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 67/24 on Jerusalem and 67/25 on the Syrian Golan.

34. Since the discontinuation of indirect peace talks in December 2008, there have been no negotiations between the parties. The Syrian conflict is further reducing the prospects for their resumption and progress towards peace between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. I look forward to a peaceful resolution of the crisis and the resumption of efforts towards a comprehensive, just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions.

V. Observations

35. A stark reminder of the risk to the ceasefire was provided by the events of 18 and 19 March in which an explosion on the Alpha side injured Israel Defense Forces soldiers, and alarmingly, the Israel Defense Forces reacted with artillery and airstrikes against Syrian armed forces, resulting in the death and injury of Syrian military personnel. I would ask the Security Council to recall that UNDOF was established 40 years ago to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and to see that it is scrupulously observed, and to supervise the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and its Protocol thereto with regard to the areas of separation and limitation, and that 40 years later the Golan is still occupied. There is a potent mix of factors now contributing to a volatile security situation that greatly risks undermining the Agreement. It remains critical that both sides work through UNDOF in case of incidents along or across the ceasefire line. The mandate of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring the stability of the region.

36. I remain deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, its impact on the Syrian population and potential implications for the stability of the region. The situation has continued to affect significantly the UNDOF area of operation. The ongoing military activities in the area of separation continue to have the potential to heighten tensions between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and to jeopardize the ceasefire between the two countries, in addition to heightening the risk to United Nations personnel.

37. The at times severe and sustained engagements between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition in close proximity to United Nations personnel and positions are of great concern. The use of heavy weapons by both the

Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition in the continuing Syrian conflict, including air power by Government forces in the area of limitation on the Bravo side, remains disturbing.

38. I am gravely concerned by the dropping of bombs onto the area of separation by the Syrian armed forces aircraft on 23 and 24 April. There should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF, and I note with concern the use of Syrian armed forces and opposition tanks during clashes in the area of separation. I call upon all parties to the Syrian conflict to cease military actions throughout the country, including in the UNDOF area of operation. I call on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to stop the use of airstrikes, which cause suffering to the civilian population. I also once again condemn the horrific atrocities committed by some armed members of the opposition and call upon all parties to the ongoing conflict to respect international humanitarian law. I reiterate that all military activities in the area of separation conducted by any actor pose a risk to the ceasefire and the local civilian population, in addition to United Nations personnel on the ground.

39. The presence of the Syrian armed forces and unauthorized military equipment in the area of separation, in addition to the firing from the Bravo side across the ceasefire line, are grave violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. All incidents of firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line are also grave violations of the Agreement. I stress the importance of all parties' liaison with UNDOF in the first instance to prevent escalation of the situation. I call upon all parties to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and ensure respect for the safety and security of United Nations personnel, in addition to freedom of movement for the Force throughout its area of operation. For its part, the United Nations will spare no effort in ensuring that the long-held ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic continues to hold.

40. Any hostile act against United Nations personnel on the ground, including restricting their movement and threatening their physical safety, the direct and indirect firing at United Nations personnel and facilities by the Syrian armed forces or armed members of the opposition, and the use of United Nations premises, including United Nations positions vacated temporarily, by anyone other than United Nations personnel, is unacceptable. I remain deeply concerned by the numerous incidents involving United Nations personnel on the ground. I am also gravely concerned about United Nations positions caught in crossfire. The safety and security of UNDOF personnel and Observer Group Golan military observers, essential to enabling UNDOF to continue to implement its mandate, must be preserved.

41. The primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side rests with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. I note the assistance provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in facilitating the provision of essential supplies in support of the Force efforts to ensure that it continues implementing its mandate safely and securely. It is imperative that respect for the privileges and immunities of UNDOF and its freedom of movement be ensured. Armed members of the opposition operating in the UNDOF area of operation must be apprised of the mandate of the Force and immediately cease any actions that jeopardize the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. The placing of improvised

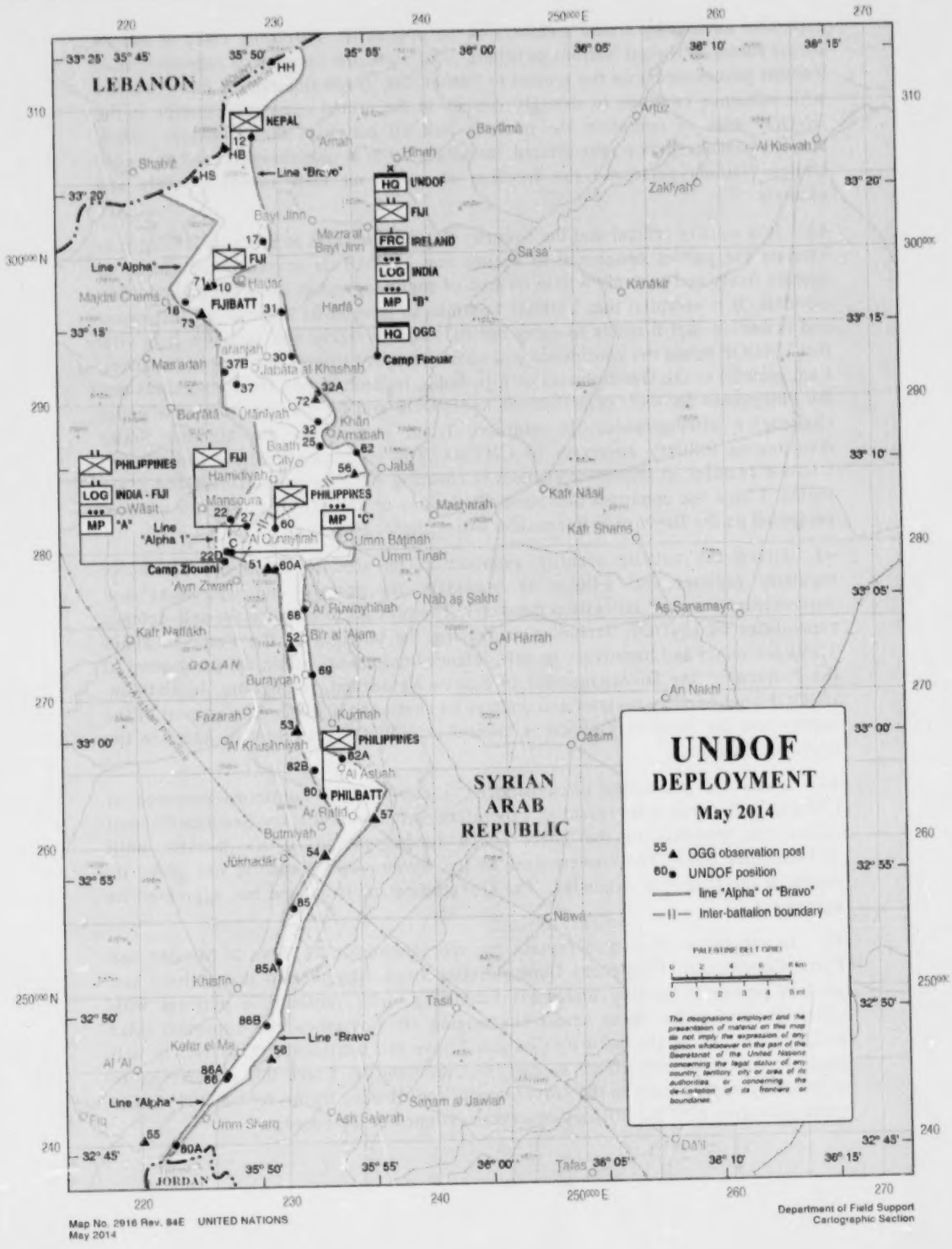
explosive devices by armed members of the opposition, especially close to and on access routes to United Nations positions, is of particular concern. It exposes United Nations peacekeepers on the ground to further risk. It remains critical that countries with influence continue to strongly convey to the armed opposition groups in the UNDOF area of operation the need to halt all activities that endanger United Nations peacekeepers on the ground, including firing at peacekeepers, and to accord United Nations personnel the freedom to carry out their mandate safely and securely.

42. It is equally critical that the Security Council continue to bring its influence to bear on the parties concerned to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate freely and securely within its area of operation and to carry out its important mandate. It is essential that UNDOF continue to have at its disposal all the means and resources that it needs to carry out its mandate safely and securely. It is vital that UNDOF retain the confidence and commitment of troop-contributing countries. I am grateful to the Governments of Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal, the Netherlands and the Philippines for their contributions to UNDOF and for staying the course under challenging circumstances. In addition, I am grateful to the Member States contributing military observers to UNTSO. The continued credible presence of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring stability on the Golan and in the region. I urge the countries that have restrictions on the activities of their military personnel on the Bravo side to consider lifting these restrictions.

43. Given the volatile security situation in its area of operation, the Force regularly reviews and adjusts as necessary its posture and operations and implements necessary mitigation measures. The process to enhance the self-defence capabilities of UNDOF, including increasing the strength of the Force to about 1,250 personnel and improving its self-defence equipment, within the parameters of the Protocol to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, is ongoing. In addition, UNDOF continuously reviews and updates its contingency plans. The support of the parties and the Security Council is critical as UNDOF continues to adapt to the evolving situation.

44. Under the prevailing circumstances, I consider the continued presence of UNDOF in the area to be essential. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 31 December 2014. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has given its assent to the proposed extension. The Government of Israel too has expressed its agreement.

45. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Head of Mission and Force Commander, Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha, and the military and civilian personnel serving under his leadership, who continue to perform with efficiency and commitment, under challenging circumstances, the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council. I have full confidence that UNDOF will continue to use its best efforts to carry out its mandate. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops to UNDOF and to those providing UNTSO military observers assigned to the Force.


LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
JORDAN
GOLAN
NEPAL
HH
HB
HS
FIJI
FIJIBATT
PHILIPPINES
INDIA - FIJI
PHILBATT
HQ UNDOF
FRC IRELAND
LOG INDIA
MP "B"
HQ OGG
Camp Faouar
MP "A"
MP "C"
Line "Alpha"
Line "Alpha 1"
Line "Bravo"
Camp Ziouani
UNDOF
DEPLOYMENT
May 2014
OGG observation post
UNDOF position
line "Alpha" or "Bravo"
Inter-battalion boundary
The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or concerning the de-limitation of its frontiers or boundaries.
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May 2014
Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section